

THE
UNLAVVFULNESSE
Of the New
COVENANT,

Briefly manifested in a Letter from
H. F. at OXFORD,

To his worthy Friend *T. A.* at
Cambridge.



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A

Letter, &c.

SIR,



That I may give you my Resolution concerning the Covenant: It is to be considered, that as in all Covenants, so in this; he that enters Covenant, approves and allows something, and undertakes something: Hee approves and allows the designe, and intentions of those hee enters Covenant with, and undertakes or binds himselfe to doe and pursue that, for which the Covenant is made and imposed,

In particular, He that enters this Covenant, doth before Almighty God professe:

I,

That he doth in conscience allow and approve the Scots Discipline and Government, and withall binds himselfe to endeavour the advancement of the

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same, by bringing this Kingdome to an Uniformity with them. For that is the notorious and knowne meaning and intention of the Imposers of this Covenant in the first *Artic.* and its a knowne and received Rule, that Oathes and Covenants are taken, not according to the reserved meaning of him that takes them, but according to the knowne and notorious meaning and intertion of them that impose them.

II.

That he doth in conscience allow and approve of the extirpation of Episcopacie, and that he will endeavour really and constantly the same, *Artic.* 2,

III.

That he doth in conscience account and esteeme those that adhere to the King (for those are there meant by them that require the Covenant) to be Indendiaries, Malignants, and common Enemies, and binds himselfe to discover unto them all such, that they may be brought to condigne punishment, *Artic.* 4. and elsewhere.

III.

That he allowes and approves the assisting and defending of all that enter into this Covenant, approves the maintaining and pursuing of this Covenant against all opposition and lets whatsoever; which

which is, by force of Armes to compell the King to the Reformation pretended herein, for that such is the meaning of assisting and defending, of maintaining and pursuing the Covenant against all opposition, is knowne and notorious by the armes which they and the Scots have taken, and used in this pursuit; and still we must remember, that Oathes and Covenants are taken in the known meaning of those that impose them. Also as such an one by taking the Covenant allowes and approves of such maintenance and pursuit of this Covenant; so he binds himselfe, to the utmost of his endeavour, to such assistance and pursuit, *Artic. 6.* and elsewhere.

Now for such Gentlemen as by entering this Covenant doe hope to be freed of prison, I would desire them to consider in what a toyle they are, far worse then the prison: for what will they doe should they have their liberty? will they sit quiet at home? No, they bind themselves expressly in this *6. Artic.* not to give themselves over to a Neutralitie in this Cause, and there they call it a thing detestable. What then? will they assist the King? No, they bind themselves not to make any defection to the contrary part; and assuredly all such as doe take the Covenant, shall be made to know they have bound themselves to assist and proceed as far as their Masters (who impose it) doe or shall thinke fit to proceed, and upon default they will be used not only as Maligants, but as perjured persons. Now although this Covenant, if taken, doth not indeed bind

to performance, yet doth it bind to a grievous Sin, in swearing to doe against that, which a man cannot in conscience performe.

V.

He that enters this Covenant, doth profess before Almighty God, that he allowes and approves all this as that which much concerns the Glory of God, the good of this Kingdome; the honour, dignity, the power and greatnesse of the King, *Artic. 6.* and elsewhere.

Now as no Subjects can with good conscience approve this and bind themselves to the pursuit of it (especially it being without and against his Sovereignes Command) so much lesse can he that abhorres these designs and proceedings, sweare and Covenant before Almighty God, that he allowes them and binds himselfe to the pursuance of them with the utmost of his power.

I marvaile much at the Resolution which was given to this purpose, That a Clergy man might not take this Covenant, but a Lay-man might. A Resolution which as it concernes onely one Article, the extirpation of Episcopacie, so doth it not satisfie in that particular; For though a Clergy man has more obligations upon him; yet would I aske: Can any Lay-man, being a Subject of this Kingdome, Covenant with other Subjects, and bind himselfe to doe or endeavour notorious injustice to others? that is, to extirpate a company of men,

men, whose calling, power, and priviledges, are as ancient as the Kingdome? also to spoyie them, or a Church rather, of possessions and interests assured to them, by as good Law as any Liberty or possession is enjoyed by other Subjects? much lesse can Subjects Covenant to force their Sovereigne to consent to such an extirpation and spoyling, from which he is bound by Oath, and cannot be released of it, but with their consent to whom he makes it, *viz.* those that here must be extirpated and spoyled:

As in this particular, so in all other purposes of this Covenant, no Subject without casting off all conscience of that which is just and right, can bind himselfe to sincere and constant pursuance of them according to the true intention of this Covenant; which he that takes it, doth undertake to doe in the presence of Almighty God: but he will rather say to his owne soule in the Psalmists words, *Wilt thou have anything to doe with the scoole or seat of wickednesse, which imagineth mischief as a Law? Psal. 94.* Or as Iacob in reference to the Brethren of cruelty. *Oh my soule enter not thou into their secret, Gen. 49. 6.*

After the resolution of conscience, it is needlesse to stand upon outward motives, to wit, the evill consequences which they threaten to bring upon Families, Inheritances, &c. yet know, that Houses and Families continue by the providence and blessing of God, not by the will of cruell and blood-thirsty men, who (as the Psalmist threatens them) *shall not themselves live out halfe their daies*; The Lord direct you, strengthen you, comfort you. A good conscience is a continuall Feast.

FINIS.